



Department of Justice

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OBSCENITY PROSECUTION TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE, PROSECUTE PURVEYORS OF OBSCENE MATERIALS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray announced today that the Criminal Division is establishing an Obscenity Prosecution Task Force dedicated exclusively to the investigation and prosecution of obscenity cases.

The Director of the Task Force and will work closely with Bruce Taylor, Senior Counsel to the Criminal Division's Assistant Attorney General, who will provide guidance in his capacity as Counsel to the Task Force.

In addition to trial attorneys from the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Criminal Division, the Task Force will draw upon the expertise of several other Criminal Division sections: the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, which will contribute strategic guidance in prosecuting complex criminal cases; the Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, which will bring experience in seizing assets obtained through criminal activity; and the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, which will assist in investigations focused on the Internet and other high-tech methods of distributing obscenity. The Task Force also will be supported by CEOS's High-Tech Investigative Unit, which consists of computer and forensic experts with knowledge of the Internet and other interactive computer systems such as peer-to-peer networks.

The Task Force will be dedicated to the investigation and prosecution of the distributors of hard-core pornography that meets the test for obscenity, as defined by the United States Supreme Court. Although the Task Force will create a singular focus for the prosecution of obscenity cases, CEOS will continue to prosecute obscenity cases in addition to child pornography, child exploitation and trafficking crimes. As in past obscenity cases, Justice Department prosecutors will continue to work in coordination with U.S. Attorneys' Offices, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and other federal and local law enforcement partners.

"The Justice Department is committed to respecting and protecting the First Amendment rights of all individuals. However, the welfare of America's families and children demands that we enforce the laws on the books, and that is what this Task Force is designed to do," said Assistant Attorney General Wray. "With the creation of this Task Force, our commitment to law enforcement in this vital area is taken one step further.

"Advances in technology and mass marketing, particularly over the past decade, have enabled the traffic in obscenity to take on a more national and even global reach," Wray added. "The special challenges that obscenity cases pose in the computer age require an equally specialized response. A coordinated Task Force of prosecutorial expertise is the best way to meet those challenges."

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